

# ***FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** May 14, 2015

**Agenda Item:** 2015 Furbearer Harvest Quotas - Proposed

**Division:** Wildlife

**Action Needed:** Proposed

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 20 minutes

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## **Background**

Furbearer season structure and quotas are defined by the F&W Commission. Proposed changes for 2015 are addressed below. All other season elements and quotas are proposed as unchanged from 2014.

- Reduce Region 4 bobcat quota from 200 to 100
- Reduce Region 5 bobcat quota from 250 to 200.
- Reduce Region 6 bobcat quota from 90 to 50.
- FWP is proposing that people harvesting bobcats be required to turn in the lower jaw for ageing. The jaw would not be returned but sent directly to the independent tooth-ageing lab for tooth extraction and ageing. This differs from the current system of requiring that the entire skull be turned in and the skulls are sent to the FWP lab in Bozeman at the end of the season. The lab then boils the skulls, extracts the teeth, sends them to the tooth-aging lab, and then returns the skulls to the individual harvesters if they want them back. The reason for the proposed change is twofold: 1) the FWP lab no longer has the capacity to process skulls, and 2) our analysis indicates it will be cheaper.
- FWP is proposing that the Commission adopt the regulation changes outlined in the lynx lawsuit settlement.

More detailed justifications for the above proposed changes are in the commission packet.

## **Public Involvement Process & Results**

Regional FWP staff attends annual District meetings of the Montana Trappers Association each spring. The public comment period for any proposal approved for public comment will run through 5 p.m., Monday, June 29, with any final adoptions at the July 11 commission meeting.

## **Alternative and Analysis**

Proposals provide sound furbearer management to include trapping with consideration of comments and concerns from other user groups. The intent is to reasonably *share* the landscape, associated resources and opportunities to the extent possible. Proposals for bobcat quotas include current information assembled by regional FWP staff.

**Agency Recommendation and Rationale:** Recommend maintaining 2014 structure and quotas except for the proposed changes above. This is consistent with existing information and represents reasonable and appropriate consideration of user groups and the continued presence of contemporary data in furbearer management that include trapping.

## **Proposed Motion**

I move to approve for public comment the proposed 2015 furbearer season structure and quota changes as proposed by the department.